



**Office of the Attorney General
Paul G. Summers**

NEWS RELEASE

Office of the Attorney General at
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STATE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST PRICE-GOUGERS

Tennessee will take action against anyone who unfairly raises prices to profit from the terrible tragedy that struck America yesterday following reports of soaring gasoline, rental car and hotel room rates.

Tennessee Attorney General Paul Summers has been notified by Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and the Governor's Office of the reports of profiteering.

"We will not tolerate the unconscionable acts of a few who intend to profit from tragedy," Attorney General Summers said. "This is a time when our thoughts and prayers are rightfully with the victims of this horrendous tragedy. We stand ready to help those who need it and to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law these rogue individuals whose greed is replacing compassion."

Gov. Don Sundquist said, "I want to assure all Tennessee citizens and businesses, and especially rural gas stations, that Tennessee has an ample supply of gas. There is no shortage. There is no reason for station owners to raise prices, and there is no reason for anyone to panic."

"And let there be no mistake, we will not tolerate anyone attempting to take advantage of the tragedy that has struck our nation. It is anti-Tennessee, it is anti-American, and we won't stand for it. We must work together now, and help one another through this catastrophe."

The Attorney General in conjunction with the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs will aggressively pursue price-gougers under the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act. Anyone who fraudulently raises prices to take advantage of public concern regarding possible shortages are engaging

in illegal conduct. Furthermore, anyone who falsely claims only premium gasoline is available in order to profit when they actually have unleaded regular gasoline in their tanks are also engaging in unfair or deceptive acts subject to the penalties of the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act.

The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and Tennessee Regulatory Authority have told the Attorney General's Office consumers should not be concerned about gasoline shortages. If consumers will not panic, there will be an adequate supply for Tennesseans.

Under the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act, the Attorney General in conjunction with the Division of Consumer Affairs can request that a court issue injunctions, order civil penalties of up to \$1,000.00 per sale for each transaction involving price gouging. The State can also seek restitution for consumers which could include refunds of the amount of overcharge plus attorneys fees and costs for the State's action.

The Attorney General will also report any violation allegations to the local District Attorneys General for criminal prosecution.

David McCollum, the Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs, said "I urge consumers to call the State's consumer hotline at 1-800-342-8385 to report price gouging activities. Please be prepared to provide the specifics including the location of the business and the price charged so we can take appropriate action."

General Summers said, "Make no mistake anyone who needlessly raises prices to take advantage of consumers will be prosecuted. We will take action to stop this despicable behavior."

Anyone who wishes to file a complaint of price-gouging may contact the Tennessee Commerce and Insurance's Consumer Affairs Division at 1-800-342-8385 or by writing to: 500 James Robertson Parkway, Davy Crockett Tower, Nashville, TN 37243-0565.